

BASILDON TOWN CENTRE CONSULTATION REPORT

July 2019



Essex County Council

Basildon Town Centre Highway and Regeneration Improvements Scheme: Consultation Report

July 2019

1.0 Purpose of this report

Essex County Council (ECC) held a public consultation on proposed highway improvements to the Basildon Town Centre in March 2019. This followed a series of member briefings at county and borough level over the previous year. Whilst the scheme is delivering the Basildon Masterplan as already approved as planning policy in 2012 by Basildon members, this public and stakeholder consultation has enabled details of the scheme to be again presented to the externally and views of the proposals sought. This consultation report considers and evaluates the feedback gathered from the public consultation and responds to those points raised.

1.1 Overview of the scheme

The proposals originate from the Basildon Town Centre Master Plan, which was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document December 2012 by Basildon Borough Council (BBC). The highway proposals of this scheme are enacting what has already been confirmed as planning policy, however bearing in mind that time has passed since the Masterplan adoption, there is an underlying need to raise the profile of the project, consult upon the highway proposals, and take action to amend the scheme if necessary depending upon the feedback received.



Figure 1 – Masterplan cover

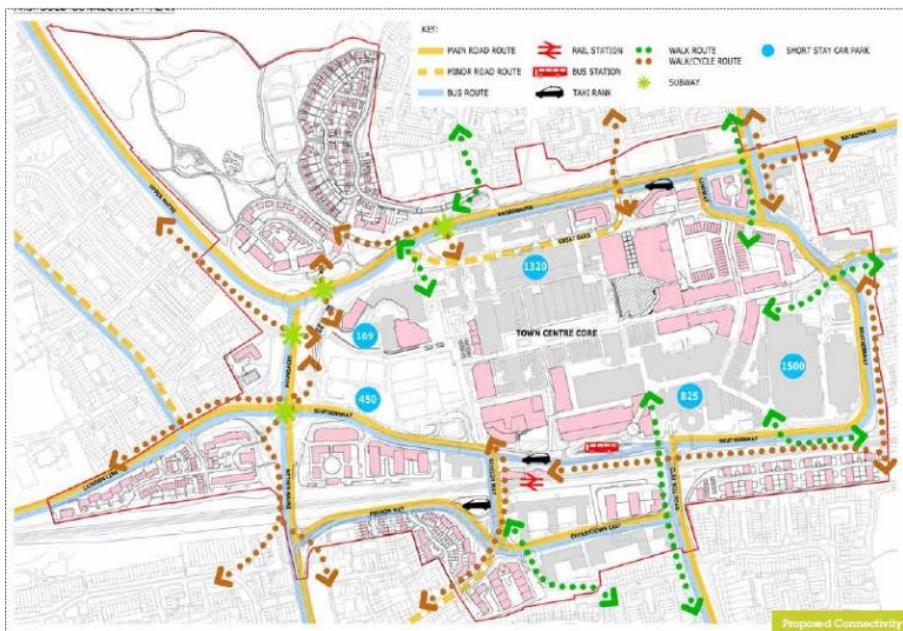


Figure 2 – Masterplan transport proposals

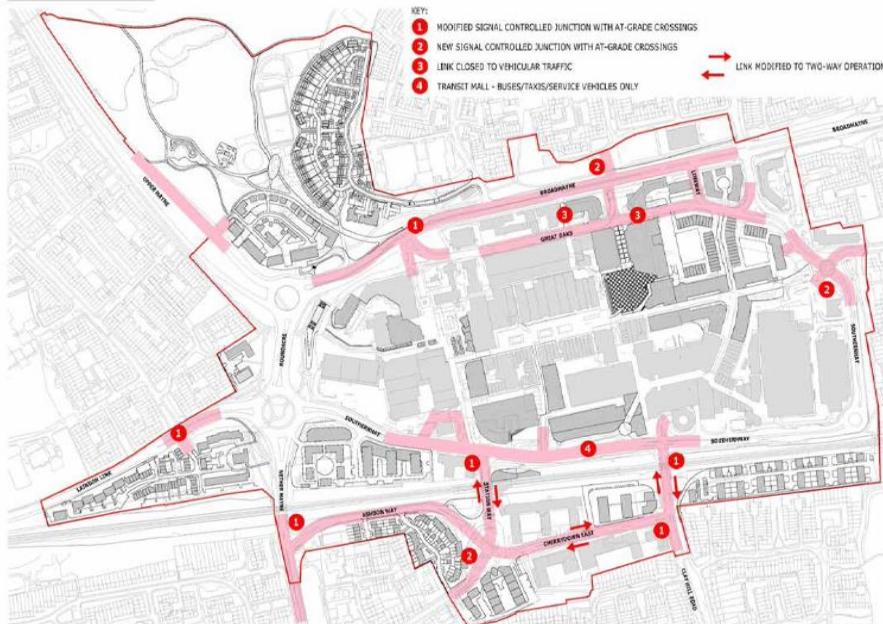


Figure 3 – Masterplan town centre highway and development proposals

The aims of the scheme are to improve ease of non-vehicular access to and across the town centre, improve connectivity, ease of access to car parks and service areas whilst discouraging traffic movements through inappropriate areas. Overall, the proposals compliment public realm improvements already occurring in the town centre, and above all are to improve perception of safety between the rail and bus station and accessibility to sustainable transport.

Whilst it is noted that the private motor vehicle retains a dominant feature of getting about, more needs to be done to tempt people away from their cars to use public transport, walking and cycling. This in turn will help relieve some pressure of the road network and release additional capacity for the growing traffic demands associated with the increasing housing and jobs growth in the Borough.

The proposals already coincide with:

- Relocation of Basildon Market to the Civic Square area.
- Relocation of the college onto the former market site.
- Other areas of the town centre redeveloped over the coming years including a new cinema for the town. Basildon Borough Council has already secured £9.7m funding through the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) for the East Square Regeneration.

ECC was successful in securing £6.26m funding for the Town Centre, originating from the wider Basildon Integrated Transport Package. This altogether has represented approximately £13m towards transport in the Basildon borough and well over £6m for the town centre alone.

1.2 Scheme proposals

These changes will enable the formation of a new sustainable transport hub / transit mall to make the area more attractive and accessible and deter unnecessary traffic from the town centre. These proposals have been through a traffic modelling process to consider the impact on the Town Centre and wider highway network. This has identified some measures on the highway network that need to be implemented to aid the distribution of traffic.

- Formation of a “Transit Mall” along Southernhay between the Rail Station and Bus Station area.
- Transit Mall area to become accessible only for Buses, Motorcyclists, Taxis, Cyclists and Pedestrians. General traffic is to be re-routed via Cherrydown East. This will be enforced with the installation of a bus gate on the approach to the Bus Station next to Market Pavement and at Clay Hill Road.
- Changes to the road layout outside the Bus and Rail Stations to enable the formation of a sustainable transport hub. This includes removal of the subway outside the Rail Station, replaced with improved surface crossings and connections between the Rail station and the town centre, creating an attractive gateway to the town centre.
- Change of traffic flow on Cherrydown East, Station Way and Clay Hill Road from one-way traffic flow to two-way traffic flow for all vehicles. This will allow vehicles to travel west to east and east to west without conflicting with the transport hub.
- Improvements to the street scene around the taxi rank outside the Bus Station.
- New taxi rank and rail replacement bus/coach stops on the southern side of Southernhay to serve the Rail Station.
- Improvements to the Bus Station waiting area, including Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) Displays.
- Improvements to the Rail Station forecourt including new paving, new and increased secure cycle storage, and new signing.
- New potential Cycle Hub / one stop shop for cyclists to the rear of the Rail Station (part of another series of works linked to this project).
- Upgrade of existing ‘puffin’ crossing on Cherrydown East to a ‘toucan’ crossing, to provide a crossing point for cyclists and pedestrians and to operate with two-way traffic to facilitate future cycle way improvements around the town centre including north-south links to the Enterprise Corridor.
- Improvements to the taxi and bus laybys outside Asda on Southernhay. It is proposed to relocate the bus stop onto the nearside lane and move the taxi rank into the current bus layby. This will improve safety for taxi users and enable buses to merge into the traffic flow more efficiently.
- Trimming and removal of some trees to provide open space and improved access between the Rail Station and Bus Station, and the town centre. This will include the removal of bushes to help deter anti-social behaviour.

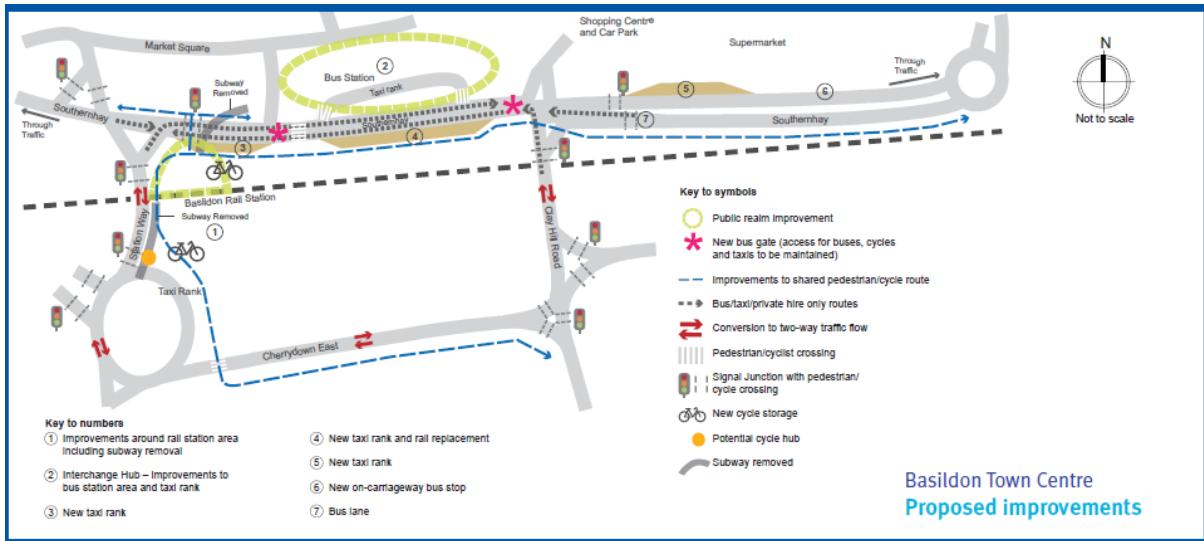


Figure 4 – Scheme plan extract from consultation leaflet

2.0 Consultation methodology

The consultation ran from Monday 4th March, concluding on Friday 29th March 2019 at midnight, however comments received immediately after this were still accepted. It was sought to make the information as widely available as possible in order to generate the most inclusive feedback.

The consultation included an information leaflet with questionnaire, detailing the proposals and inviting comments. The questionnaire was available both online through a scheme dedicated website at essex.gov.uk/basildontc. Hard copies were also made available at Basildon Council offices reception and library and Kingswood Play Group Centre, with a box available to post the completed questionnaires for those respondents who preferred to provide comments in hard copy. In addition to this and in response to a request, hard copy questionnaires were also placed in the main reception of Trafford House between 15th March and 31st March 2019. In all cases a banner/display stand advising of the scheme and the questionnaire was erected to draw attention from passers-by to the questionnaires.

2.1 Communications used

All information was primarily communicated via the following methods:

- A dedicated scheme website: essex.gov.uk/basildontc. This included the overview of the scheme, an information leaflet and an online questionnaire.
- Consultation leaflet – this was provided at the locations referred to above and included a detachable hard copy questionnaire.
- Completed questionnaires could be submitted online, via a (monitored) scheme post box, or via post to ECC.
- Press release sent out in advance of the consultation.
- Letters to county members, local ward members and stakeholders advising of the consultation, sent via e-mail.
- ECC Member Enquiries and Contact Centre provided with details of the consultation to pass to members of the public who call regarding the Basildon Town Centre scheme and how they can comment on the scheme.

- Member briefings over the past year including Basildon cabinet members in June 2018, as well as stakeholder meetings including the Basildon Bus Forum, the Basildon Taxi and Private Hire Forum, C2C and First Group Ltd.

2.2 Format of the leaflet and questionnaire

The scheme consultation leaflet and questionnaire provided a full overview of the proposals. Specifically, this included:

- Origins of the scheme and introduction from the Deputy Leader of Essex County Council and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Councillor Kevin Bentley.
- Overview of the improvements including a timeline of milestones to illustrate the step to be taken within the project up to and including construction.
- Proposals plan which with annotations showing the proposals across the town centre area.
- Two visualisations to illustrate the proposals, one of the Bus Station / Transit Mall and one of the main forecourts outside the Rail Station.
- Short questions to determine where users of the town centre originate from in locational terms, the rate of usage of the town centre, and appetite for the proposals. There was also an 'additional comments' box where respondents were invited to feedback their views on other related matters concerning the town centre. These were also assessed and are evaluated in the 'Results' section of this report.



Figure 5 – Visualisation of the transit mall

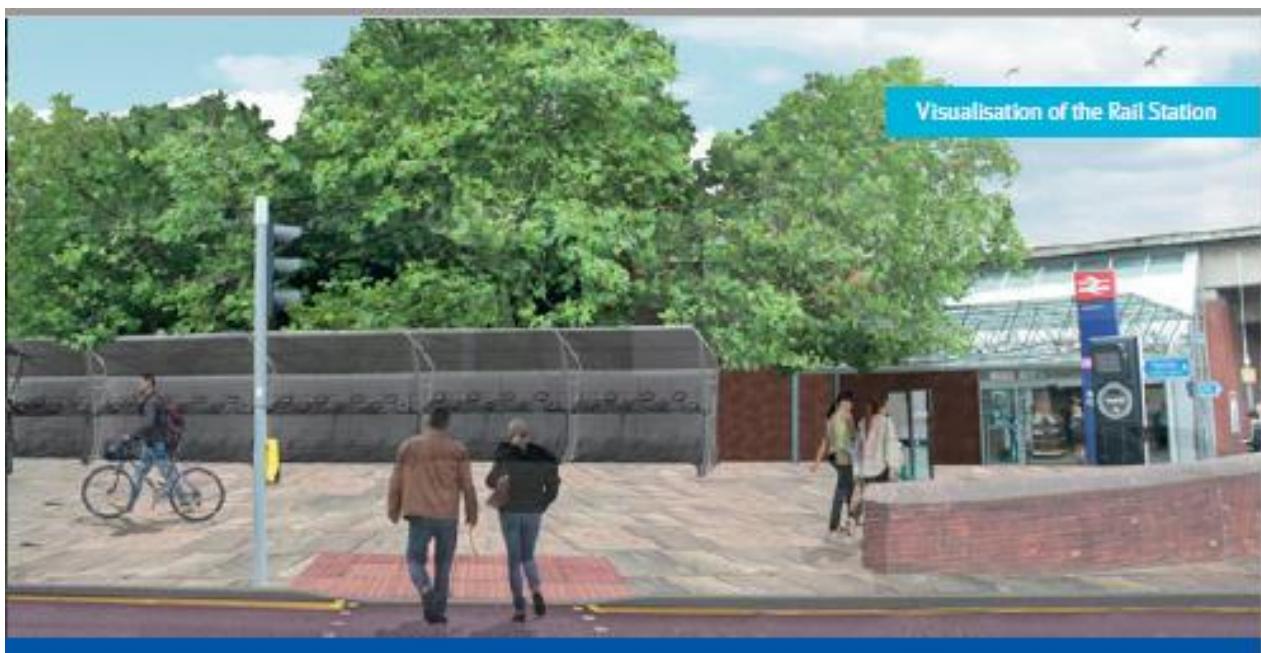


Figure 6 – Visualisation of the rail station

2.3 Stakeholders contacted directly and via E-mail

- County, borough and ward members affected in the vicinity of the scheme.
- Emergency services.
- Voluntary / community organisations.
- Basildon Bus Forum and Basildon Taxi and Private Hire Forum.
- Working in partnership with key partners Basildon Borough Council (BBC), Basildon Town Centre Management Company (BTCM), C2C, First Group Ltd, Eastgate Shopping Centre.

3.0 Feedback received

A total of 125 questionnaires were received. This includes 38 via e-mail correspondence, 82 online surveys, and 5 by post.

3.1 What we have already changed as result of feedback

As referred to above, the original scheme had already been consulted upon by Basildon Borough Council as part of their Town Centre Masterplan. Having undertaken a series of briefings, there were two elements of the scheme that were fundamentally opposed by some Basildon/county members. The practicalities of these two elements were revisited and as a result, the following amendments to the scheme were made:

3.1.1 Retaining of the Ghyllgrove Bus Link

The potential need to remove the restriction on the northbound section of the Ghyllgrove Bus Link to facilitate the wider regeneration of Basildon town centre was proposed. Effectively the removal would act as a relief valve for traffic flow around the Town Centre. However, some Basildon/county members were clear in their absolute opposition to this element of the scheme, both bearing in mind the increases in traffic that would follow in this residential

area, and that great efforts were made to install this sustainable bus link. As a result, the bus link will not be removed.

3.1.2 Retain existing Cherrydown East parking restrictions

There has been an issue whereby residents of the Trafford House development have been parking anti-socially on Cherrydown East and hindering bus movements to and from the bus depot. As a result, various methods to control the parking were sought however from a Traffic Regulation Order perspective, no solution was identified that did not have negative impacts on buses, who themselves could be fined for parking on the road. Despite there being potential parking places further afield, some councillors opposed the notion of these restrictions and the impact that this would have on local residents. This opposition, coupled with the impractical aspect of blanket Traffic Regulation Orders, meant that this element of the project needed to be revisited.

As a result, the decision has been made to retain as much of the existing parking restrictions on Cherrydown East as possible and to leave the parking situation almost as existing. There will be some minor road marking changes to allow the buses easier access to the bus depot.

3.2 How we are dealing with the feedback and external factors

In addition to the feedback received during the member and stakeholder consultation and changes made as a result, as specified in 3.1, the feedback was considered, noted and evaluated. A categorical system was used to report back on all issues raised and a “response” to that feedback is included below.

The consultation has been successful in obtaining and evaluating feedback and comments from town centre users, residents and councillors. The comments received have been invaluable to the ongoing progression of the scheme, which has been amended as a result. There is clearly appetite to regenerate the town centre and the surrounding area and it is necessary for the scheme to communicate comprehensively with the public and interested parties throughout implementation.

Whilst traffic flows and congestion will increase in the future, these will not be massively exacerbated by the scheme and mitigation will be picked up to combat this as part of the emerging Local Plan.

3.2.1 Statistical Bias

A number of questionnaires referred to the existence of a “newsletter” that was circulated within some properties within the town centre area, including Morello Quarter and Trafford House. It was suggested by a number of residents that the scheme would have serious negative impacts on the environment, namely air quality and traffic flow, which was advised within the newsletter. As a result, a number of questionnaire responses quoted the same statistics, and in some cases, there were responses that were exactly duplicated. However, as far as the consultation is concerned some of the feedback received will be “skewed” and have the risk of a potential bias, with external negative information potentially forming part of the mind set of respondents prior to filling out the questionnaire. Whilst the newsletter being referred to has not been acquired by the county council, there is compelling evidence as to the existence of one.

4.0 Responses to the Consultation

There was a total of 125 responses received for the Basildon Town Centre Highway and Regeneration Improvements Scheme. All comments that have been received as part of this process have been logged, evaluated and action taken where necessary.

4.0.1 Responses to the Major Schemes E-mail Address

38 responses were received. The responses varied between support, opposition, neutral as well as others seeking reassurance as to the impact of traffic flows at Cherrydown. The specific feedback has been categorised and is shown below.

4.0.2 Responses to the Consultation Questionnaire – Online

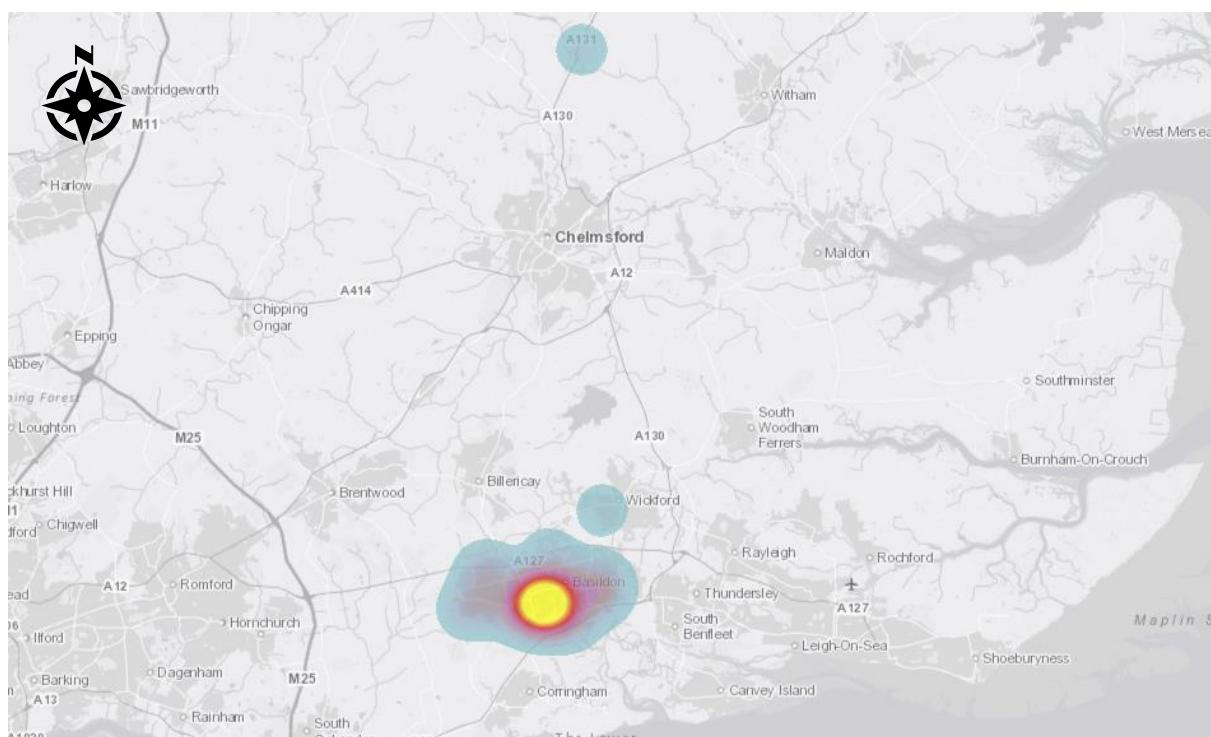
A total of 82 questionnaires were completed. The feedback was a mixture of views, some supporting and others not.

4.0.3 Responses to the Consultation Questionnaire – Hard Copy

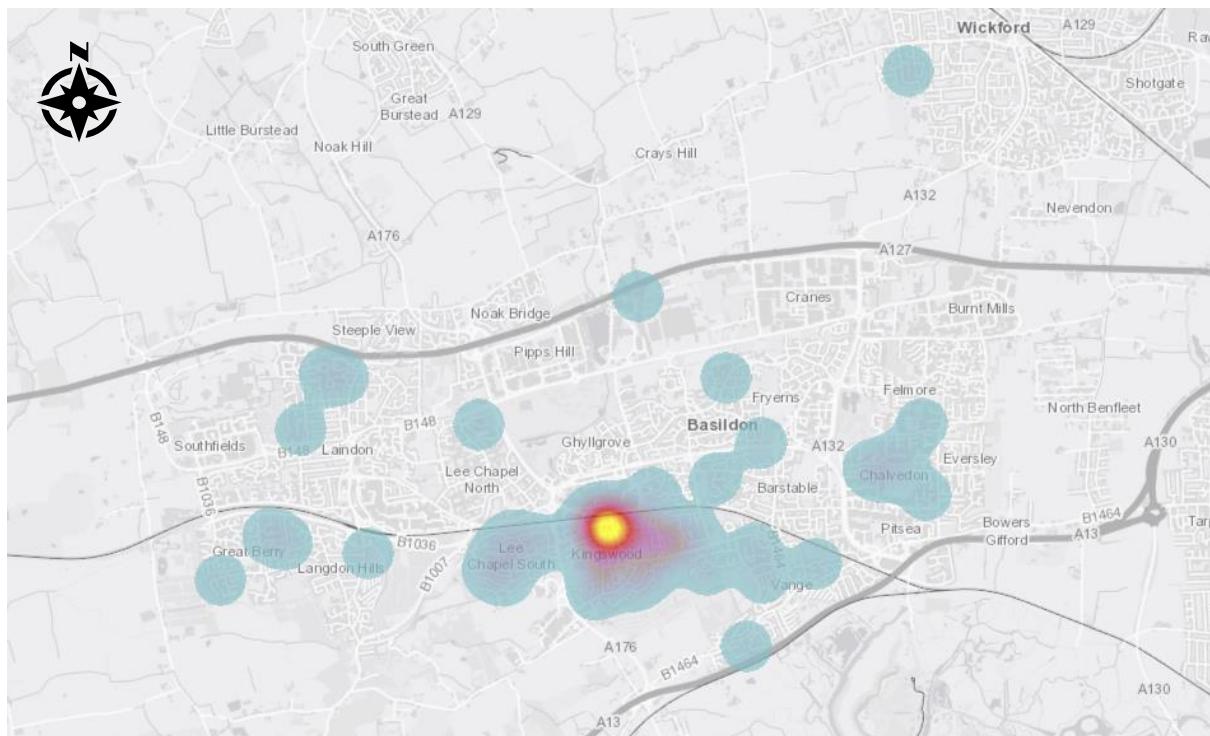
A total of 5 questionnaires were received by post. These too were varied in terms of support for elements of the scheme.

4.1 Geographical responses to the questionnaire

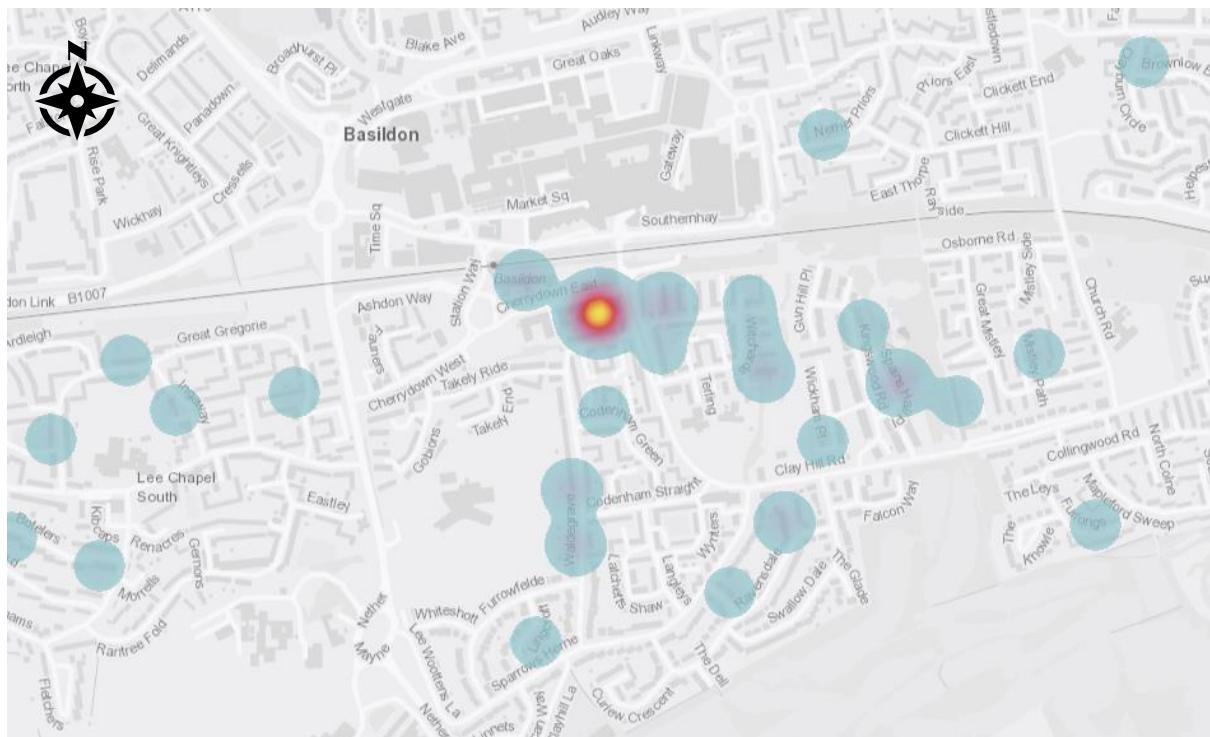
Question 1 of the pull-out hard copy questionnaire and the online questionnaire asked respondents to kindly give us their postcodes (in part or in full). Those that did give us their post codes were used to create a heatmap of respondents on the next page:



Map 1 – Mapping showing all respondents that gave their postcodes



Map 2 – Mapping showing respondents that gave their postcodes in the wider Basildon area.



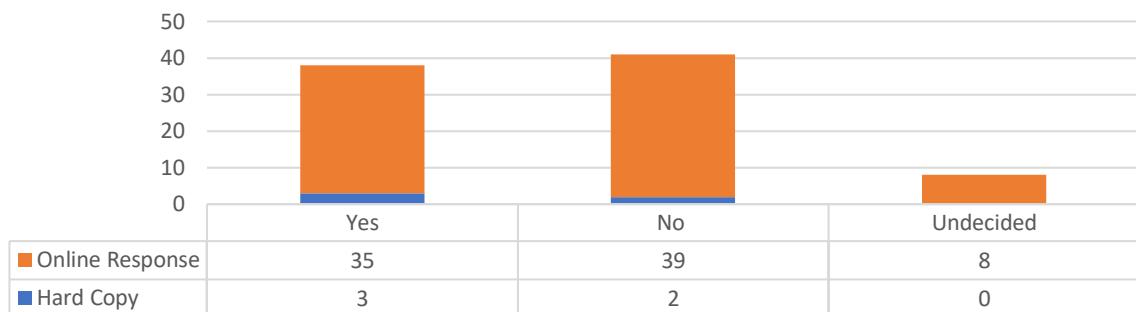
Map 3 – Mapping showing all respondents that gave their postcodes around the area of the scheme

4.2 Analysis of Questions

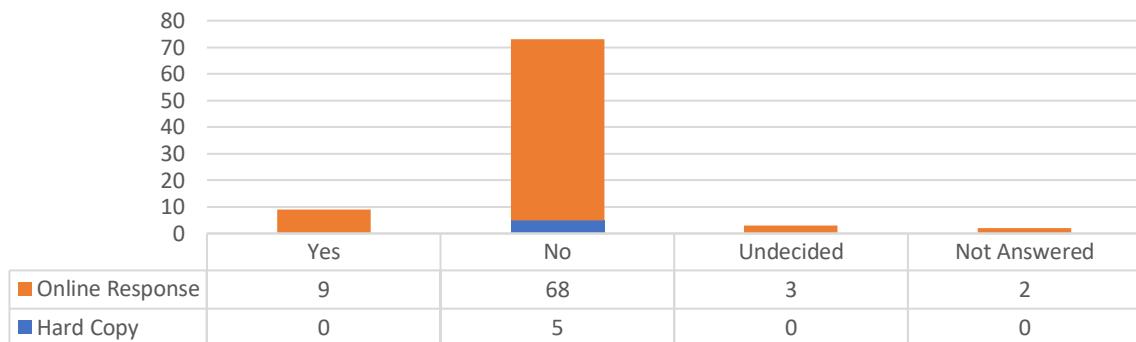
The 8 questions posed in the questionnaire received online and by post, were collated and analysed (Questions 1 and 8 are free text, Questions 2 to 7 are “closed” statistical). The results of the statistical questions are below:

4.2.1 Statistical Question Results

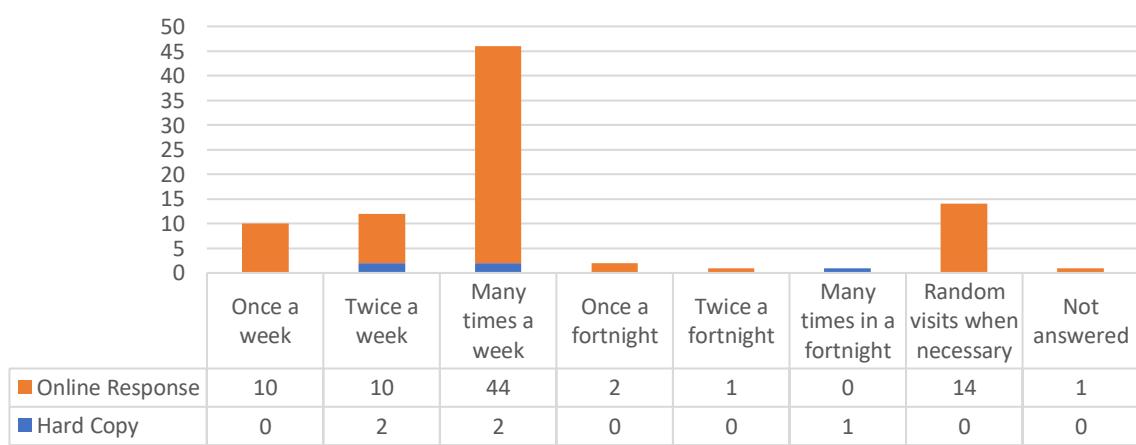
Q2. Do you think improvements to access and public realm are needed at the Basildon Town Centre?



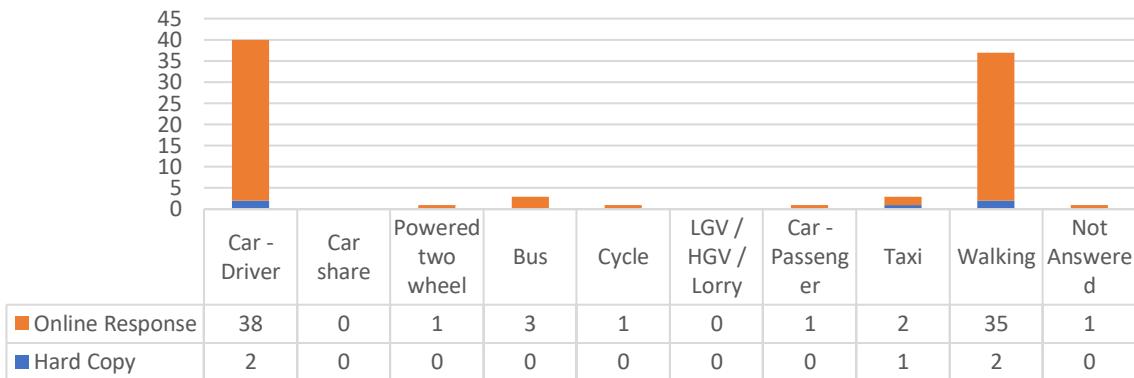
Q3. Would you be inclined to use the new cycle storage once it is available?



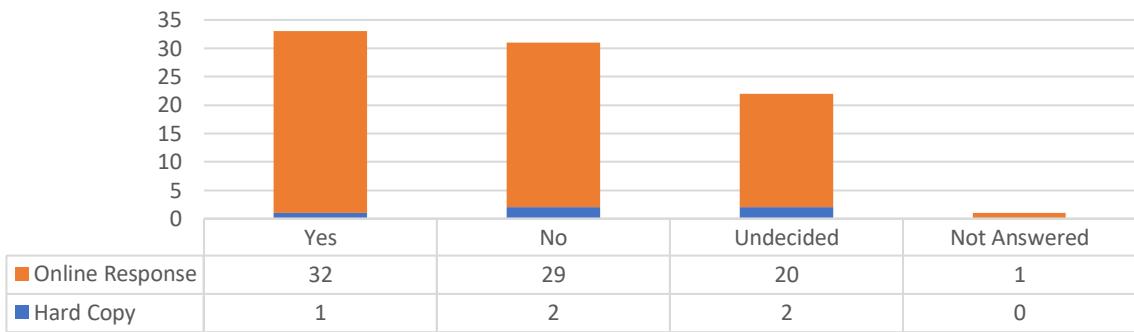
Q4. How often do you visit the Basildon Town Centre?



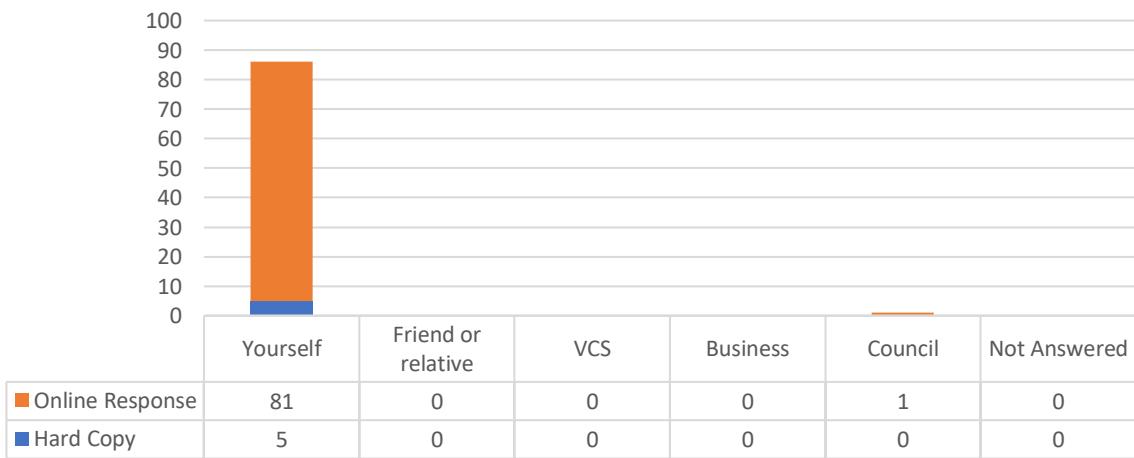
Q5. What mode of transport do you use most regularly when travelling to and from the Basildon Town Centre?



Q6. Do you support the formation of a sustainable transport hub?



Q7. Are you completing this questionnaire on behalf of:



4.2.2 What the results mean and show

Question 2 was designed to provide an insight as to the level of appetite for improvements to access and public realm within the town centre area. It appears that the online respondents

felt (just over half) that improvements to access within the town centre were not required. However, this view could be explained by observation that the majority of respondents had already accessed the town centre by car and, in comparison with other transport modes, might not have the same level of challenge in getting to and from the town centre. There was a degree of uncertainty for online and hard copy respondents, which perhaps implies that this question was too broad.

Question 3 showed that the majority of respondents would not be inclined to use the new secure cycle storage. Again, this could be explained that the majority of respondents accessed the town centre by car and would not benefit from this element of the scheme. Similarly, there has been anecdotal evidence that there is a negative perception of the security issues associated with existing cycle storage, and therefore this scheme will seek to address this through clean, secure cycle storage.

Question 4 showed that the majority of respondents either visited the town centre many times within the week, or at random. This helped to illustrate that the feedback provided originated from regular users of the town centre.

Question 5 sought to identify the primary transport mode that respondents used to access the town centre. It was evident that the car and walking were the two main modes, which helps to illustrate why the public realm improvements are necessary. By improving the public realm and connection between the bus and rail stations it is evident that there will be benefits to usage if these existing numbers are increased from the base numbers of walkers.

Whilst for question 6 the majority of respondents supported the formation of a transport hub, this was a close-run result and with a number of respondents 'undecided'. It is clear that the scheme will need to convey better what a transport hub is and demonstrate the benefits of a transport hub via these improvements.

All but one respondent for question 7 were completing the questionnaire on their own behalf, with the exception being from a Basildon Borough Councillor.

4.3 Comments and Categories

Question 8 of the questionnaire was open to any comments that any respondent wished to add. Conversely, any responses sent to the Major Schemes e-mail address were considered as comments. These comments were then collated, and similar themes began to appear, and these were then categorised accordingly.

The main categories of comments that arose were about:

- Basildon Borough Council and the Town Centre Masterplan,
- Basildon bus station,
- Issues on Cherrydown East,
- The bus depot (on Cherrydown East),
- ECC finances and the scheme funding,
- Other schemes in the Basildon area,
- The sustainable transport hub,
- Car parks within the scheme area,
- Safety – pedestrian and vehicular,
- Scheme design specifics,

- Trafford House and the immediate area,
- The consultation for the Basildon Town Centre scheme; and
- Environmental issues.

4.4 Answers to Received Comments

As previously mentioned, received comments have been analysed and separated into categories. The below forms the basis of ECC's answers to these comments and questions.

Basildon Borough Council and the Town Centre Masterplan

- *The Town Centre Masterplan document was released in 2012, this document is 7 years old, so it cannot be considered as it shows old and inaccurate information. It was created when there were no residential properties along Cherrydown East and now there are significant amounts of flats and residents.*

The Basildon Town Centre Masterplan, published in 2012 and adopted as a supplementary document for the local plan, is a future vision document that gives the overall plan and strategy for the development and regeneration of the town centre up to 2030 and beyond. The county council is supportive of Basildon Borough Council's vision of the future to make the town centre a truly successful place. Businesses will want to locate there, and people will want to live, work and spend their leisure time there.

The Masterplan has always identified the area around Clay Hill Road, Cherrydown East and Station way as potential residential development sites as displayed in the picture below:

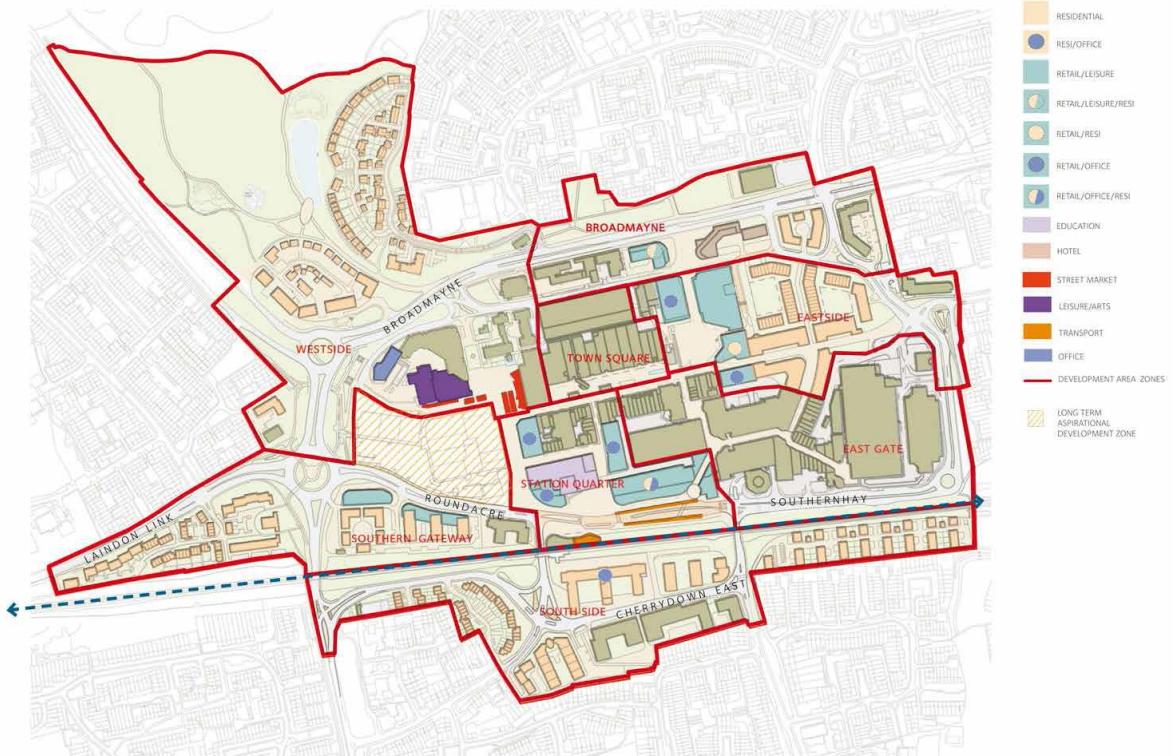


Figure 7 – Development areas highlighted in the town centre masterplan

The potential timescales for development are as displayed in the map below:

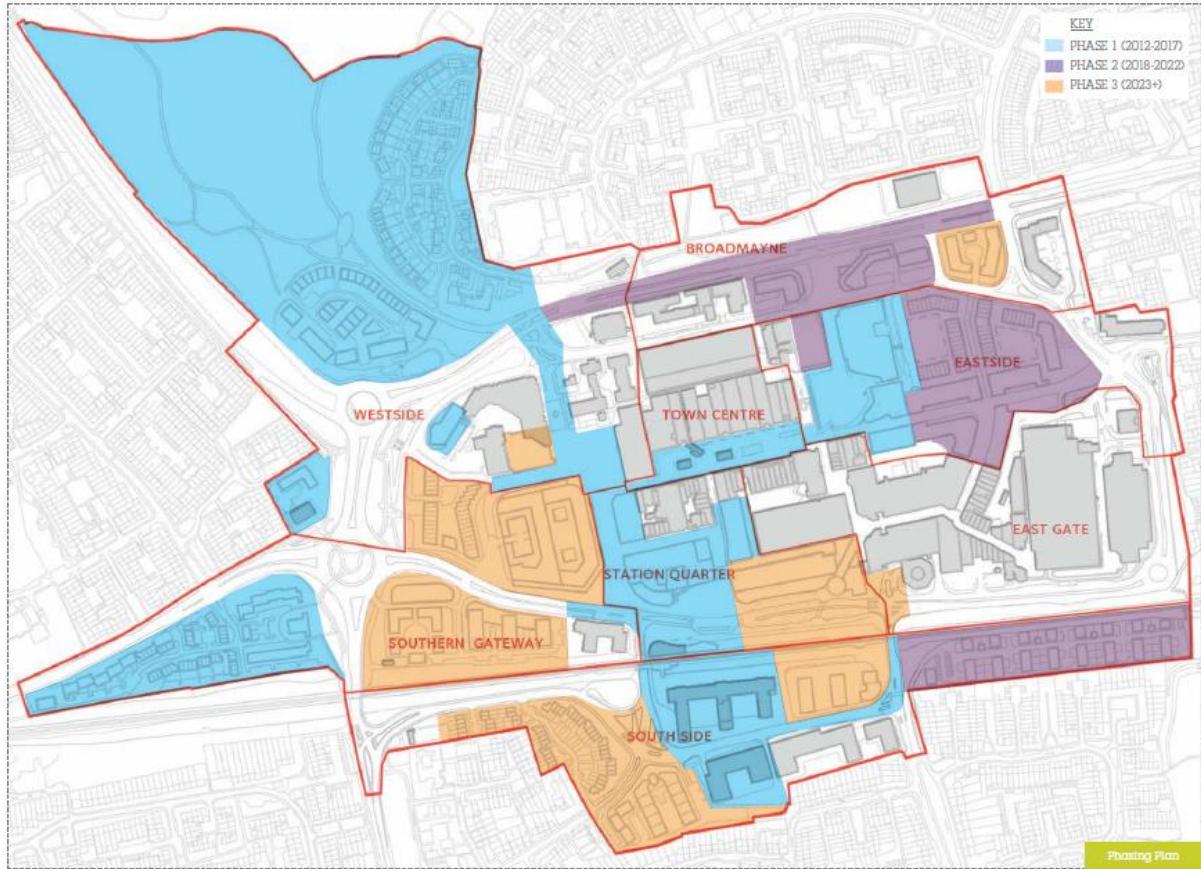


Figure 8 – Masterplan timescales

- *Why do we need these changes, I cannot see how this will be an improvement? What Benefits will this scheme bring to the residents of Basildon as I suspect there will be major disruption to traffic? If so, this will not be an incentive to come into town?*

These changes form part of the already adopted Basildon Town Centre Masterplan 2012, as part of regeneration of the town centre. Central to this is improved connectivity between new town centre development and access and egress within the town centre. An improved public realm is a key pre-requisite to encouraging new business and forming a catalyst to stimulate the local economy. Access to the town centre will be maintained and will not be significantly impacted upon as part of this scheme.

- *Currently there is enough congestion in town and your scheme certainly does not mitigate any of these, it is hard to exit on Cherrydown in one-way let alone two-way / It will cause gridlock in the town centre where none exists.*

This scheme will not significantly impact the existing traffic and it will not cause further congestion, it will in fact provide journey time improvements through the new intelligent traffic signals and the re-distribution of vehicle routing.

- *Specific Basildon Queries:*
 - *Mosaic tile artwork above the bus station.*

- *We now have very limited shops in the town centre, but plenty of cafes and restaurants and now a planned cinema, we have one at the festival of leisure park.*
- *May I ask also why is there going to be another college being put where the old market was*
- *We should be looking at ways for our shops to stay open*
- *What are you doing about the homeless in the area*
- *The current regeneration scheme around the area around St. Martin's Church*
- *The pavement outside the market is very uneven.*
- *No one will come to Basildon when they can go to elsewhere and park for free.*
- *Certain buildings in the area look ugly.*
- *Access for residents to open space*
- *Perception of people being put off coming into town with the increase of footfall.*

All these issues are not within the remit of this scheme; however, this report has been shared with Basildon Borough Council.

- *Is the logic that the scheme will force people onto buses? Basildon was founded on the motor industry and car use will not disappear as lifestyles have evolved dependent on the car and indeed commercial vehicles.*

It is acknowledged that the private car remains a dominant mode of transport on our highway network. This scheme looks to promote the use of sustainable transport such as cycling, buses and trains, but not at the expense of the private car user. Greater uptake of sustainable transport modes will help to reduce the impact of the private car.

Bus Station

- *Will the construction works be phased at the Bus Station?*

Yes, the works will be phased. The appointed contractor will create a phasing plan that balances being the least disruptive and getting the works down as quick as possible. Key stakeholders such as shops in the vicinity of the bus station will be contacted to make them aware of the phasing.

- *Could a nicer seating area be installed into the Bus Station?*

Installing additional benches into the bus station was looked into. But, after listening to key stakeholders for the area, unfortunately the decision was taken to not install these as this could create some anti-social behaviour which could be disruptive to the retail units and the traveling public at Basildon bus station.

Cherrydown East

- *Changing Cherrydown East to two-way from one-way will increase/double/quadruple the traffic. One way works well, so there is no reason for doing this change as it won't work.*

Traffic levels will change due to the nature of the scheme, but not to any extent that has been reported. Also, a large number of vehicles will be re-routed from using Cherrydown East. The two-way change will open up sustainable transport improvements and will unlock potential improvements and developments to the "Southside" area as indicated in the Basildon Masterplan. The traffic flow has been modelled from a capacity and congestion perspective and this flows well.

- *Bus drivers, Taxi drivers and all residents of Basildon oppose these plans.*

We have been working closely with First Group with regards to the bus station improvements and the team at the depot with regards to how the services are run. The Taxi Forum has been updated and general feedback is very positive. Basildon residents responding to the consultation, especially ones that reside along Cherrydown East, have been the majority source of opposition. Their opposition has been based on factually incorrect newspaper articles and newsletters, which we hope this report will allay any of those fears and issues.

- *It is hard to exit onto Cherrydown East in one-way, let alone two-way. It is a race track currently as it's a straight road and need speed humps or traffic calming measures.*

With the change to two-way, the traffic will naturally slow down to the advertised speed limit as opposed to driving down a very wide one-way road, which psychologically creates the impression to any driver using this road that it should be faster, which as a result traffic will drive faster. With regards to exiting the residential zones, this will be like any other situation where a junction meets a two-way carriageway. If crossing the traffic is an issue, we would suggest residents to make a left turn to avoid crossing the traffic flow.

- *Bus / taxi lanes and banned right / left turns are particularly good at promoting pollution.*

With the advent of better technologies in vehicles, i.e. emission controls, hybrid engines, "start-stop" and with improvements in signal control technology such as Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique (SCOOT) and Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation (MOVA) this can be managed effectively.

- *Extra noise will be created from lorries delivering the goods to the town all day and night e.g. Asda, Iceland.*

The county council will be contacting the retail units to advise them to promote the access routes of either Broadmayne/Southernhay to the east and Broadmayne or Nethermayne/Roundacre to the west. This will stop them using the Cherrydown East loop to access the shops.

- *The beeping sound of the new puffin crossing by Trafford House also adds to the noise issue... which in turn only make things worse.*

The puffin crossing will be upgraded to a toucan crossing to allow cyclists to use the crossing without dismounting. As part of the works we can certainly manage the volume of the beeping and we can programme the system to be mute from the evening to the early morning to reduce the impact on residents in the area.

- *What parking restrictions will there be on Cherrydown East?*
 - *There is insufficient parking in the flats*
 - *There are too many cars parked down Cherrydown East*
 - *Where will the parking be displaced to? There are already parking problems in nearby streets, will parking restrictions be added to these streets?*
 - *Buses park outside depot*
 - *I am disabled/ I have disabled relatives, where do they park?*

As part of the Basildon Town Centre Highways Improvements scheme, we will be rationalising parking along Cherrydown East to suit the new two-way flow, allow unrestricted bus turning movements in and out of the depot as well as trying to maintain the status quo as much as possible. A summary of what we are changing and retaining are as follows:

- Double yellow lines that have been installed as part of the Trafford House development will be retained (All be it, following the kerbing once the additional strip paving has been converted to traditional carriageway)
- Double yellow lines will be installed along the north section of Cherrydown East (the same side as the Bus Depot) from where the Trafford House development finished to the Junction with Clay Hill Road.
- Single yellow lines and the “no waiting, 8am – 6pm” restrictions will predominantly remain along the south section of Cherrydown East (the same side as the Morello Quarter building) from the Clay Hill Road junction to the access for flat parking
- Isolated strips of double yellow lines will be installed opposite the Bus Depot entrances to allow for better access/egress.

Bus Depot

- *Buses returning to the depot, waiting to turn into the forecourt and parked along Cherrydown East cause delays.*

We will be coordinating directly with First Group Ltd for strategies on how the buses can return to the depot without parking on the road as well as blocking the carriageway waiting to turn into the depot.

- *The noise of the bus's engines running nightly and early morning is creating unacceptable noise levels and is very intrusive to those living in the flats, this scheme will only make that worse.*

The scheme will not change the level of noise created from the buses at the bus depot. Complaints of this nature need to be logged with Basildon Borough Council's Environmental team.

- *Why do we need such a big bus garage when bus travel is in decline?*

This depot is owned and run by First Group Ltd, a private company. It has to be its current size to manage the sheer number of buses serving the area to either refuel, clean and maintain it's bus stock. This scheme is trying to promote bus patronage as it has significant benefits with regard to air quality, traffic congestion and to help the local economy.

- *The bus depot is the problem, can this be moved or is it moving in the future?*

The land the bus depot is situated is owned by First Group Ltd. They currently have no future plans to move the depot. But, this land has been identified in the Basildon Town Centre Masterplan as a potential area for development. So, if Basildon Borough Council and First Group Ltd can identify another site that would be suitable for a new South Essex depot which could be larger and have better facilities installed, then there may be an opportunity for a move.

- *This scheme also fails to identify any improvements for the bus depot at Cherrydown East.*

As mentioned previously, the depot is owned and run by First Group Ltd. It is up to them to decide how they choose to manage the depot. With regards to access and egress, we will be looking at ways of helping the buses get in and out of the yard with double yellow road markings and slight kerb changes in the vicinity of their accesses.

Finances

- *I object to my rates and taxes being used for a new traffic system when the present system works perfectly well.*

This scheme is predominantly funded by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) as part of the Governments Local Growth Fund strategy. There are also a few developer S106 monies that are held for improvements to the area. The balance is funded by ECC's capital fund, which is not funded by council tax.

- *It is a waste of money.*

As part of the bidding process for the money from SELEP, a full economic assessment had to be created. This then provides a Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) figure that informs the validity of the scheme. Any figure above 1 is considered a good scheme and is usually approved.

- *Don't spend the money on this scheme. Keep the money and use it to fix potholes, kerbs, drainage etc.*

If the scheme is cancelled, the money will be returned to SELEP and the developers can claim back the S106 contributions. The ECC capital fund will merely be put towards an existing scheme or a new scheme. Highways maintenance is managed by another form of funding known as “revenue” which is funded by the council tax payer.

- *Use the money to resurface the roads*

As part of this scheme we are completely refurbishing the existing highway asset from Foderwick to the roundabout next to Asda on Southernhay. And where necessary, we will be refurbishing the highway asset around the Clay Hill Road / Cherrydown East / Station Way loop. This will be done by removing the Tarmacadam surfacing down to the Concrete slab subbase (this is the predominant highway construction method used around Basildon) a glass fibre geo-grid reinforcing layer will then be applied and the road will then be completely resurfaced. This reinforcing layer will then prevent a phenomenon known as reflective cracking, which you will currently see on most roads in Basildon. This is where the concrete sub-bases move with slight movements in the ground as a result of season changes, which in turn makes the surfacing crack. This is then exacerbated by water ingress and in the winter by freeze/thaw action which spalls the surfacing material and creates long strips which need filling.

- *Use the money to improve transport links*

As part of the scheme, we are improving the links to and from the Bus Station and the Rail Station to help commuters and visitors to Basildon get in and out of the town in a sustainable and unrestricted way. We are trying to promote the use of sustainable travel methods and modal shifts in an ever-changing area subject to growth.

Other schemes

- Other scheme issues:

- *Every night I commute from Chelmsford back to Basildon. A very simply solution to remove some congestion is to simply add an additional slip road from the A130, onto the A1245 and then onto the A127.*
- *I have issues with the Noak Hill A127 junction*
- *I have issues with Nethermayne/ The Knares junction*
- *I have issues with Dunton Road junction*
- *I think a yellow box is required at Cherrydown lights on Nethermayne*
- *I have concerns about what this will do to the increasing traffic build up on Nethermayne from the town centre towards the hospital. The traffic lights at dry street do not help and with more housing being built in that area, it will only get worse again. This is something I feel needs great consideration.*

Please go to essexhighways.org for all details of any upcoming major or minor highway schemes, such as the A127/A130/A1245 Fairglen Interchange scheme, which looks to improve the highway experience for all residents of Essex. If you have any concerns with any existing highway issues or previous highway improvement schemes, please log this on the Essex Highways website.

Sustainable transport hub

- *What is a sustainable transport hub? Neither the bus station or train station are moving. What is unsustainable about the current arrangement?*

A Sustainable Transport Hub is an area or a zone where all or the majority of a town or city's sustainable transport is situated. This aids the interchange between transport modes and promotes the use, where possible of using sustainable transport methods. Sustainable urban transport includes:

- Trains,
- Buses,
- Taxis,
- Cycling;
- Walking.

Car parks

- *Can traffic turn right out of Ashdon Way from the car park onto Station way*

Most car parks on the new two-way loop will remain “left in – left out” and have the same entrance and exit routes. Right turns into and out of these car parks will be banned to aid in traffic flow. So, there will be no change to any drivers entering and exiting these car parks to what exists now. The only change is the car park, taxi rank and drop off/pick up area in the Cherrydown East/Station Way roundabout outside of Trafford House. This is accessed by travelling south down Station Way from Roundacre and turning left into the southern entrance. The exit will then be opposite Ashdown Way and will be a left turn only. This was done due to traffic flow, safety and traffic signal designs.

Safety

- *This scheme will cause a lot of accidents and will be a danger to road users and pedestrians when crossing the road. High numbers of dangerous access/ egress movements to residential properties on Cherrydown East.*

As part of the design and build process at key stages, multiple Road Safety Audits (RSA) are conducted to highlight any safety concerns with the scheme. This is done by an independent team that have no involvement with the development of the design and are able to review the scheme with a fresh outlook. Anything raised in these reports will be dealt with or mitigated to ensure a safe design is then implemented.

- *Due to the lack of parking restrictions currently in place often make it difficult to identify on-coming traffic. Updating Cherrydown East to a two-way traffic flow would make access impossible and extremely dangerous.*

As mentioned previously, we will be rationalising parking along Cherrydown East to suit the new two-way flow, allow unrestricted bus turning movements in and out of the depot as well as trying to maintain the status quo as much as possible. Some parking will still be prevalent in the area, but not as much as existing. This is something the RSA team will look into as part of their review.

Scheme Design Specifics

- *There is no need to pedestrianise Southernhay. All you will do is cause further gridlock on the surrounding roads*

We are not pedestrianising Southernhay. This is factually incorrect and has been reported in the local and digital newspapers as such. Southernhay, between Station Way and Clay Hill Road will predominantly become a zone of Bus Lanes with Bus Gate enforcement.

- *Will there be traffic lights outside of train station pick up/ drop off outside Trafford House.*

There will be traffic lights outside the exit junction, but not one for exiting traffic from the Trafford House drop off/pick up. This will be assessed by the latest RSA and a set will be installed if deemed required.

- *How is traffic controlled at the junctions? Junctions don't seem to be aligned to two-way traffic, how will this work?*

The plan that was included in the consultation document was merely for information and conceptual. The detailed designs will be worked on, and the drawings will be published on the website once completed. As part of the scheme, the traffic islands will need to be realigned to suit two-way movements. Traffic will be controlled by traffic signals at 4 main locations:

- Roundacre/Southernhay/Station Way
- Ashdon Way/Station Way
- Clay Hill Road/Cherrydown East
- Southernhay/Clay Hill Road

- *If I am coming from "A" trying to get to "B", how will I do this with the new arrangement?*

Please see the maps below showing all possible movements dependant on which direction you approach the town centre.

- *It used to be this way before and didn't work*

There are many situations across the county where many years have passed from a change in the highway network, and the junction or area has been amended to very similar, if not the same as, what was once there. This is a natural change. Many factors can affect why it was changed in the first place, then differing or an increase

of the original factors may require further changes, which sometimes can result in the original design being reinstated.

Factors that affect this can include:

- Residential developments – more vehicles are on the road in the area
 - Position of the residential development – There could be an uneven increase to one area which could affect junctions.
 - Type of junction – a good example would be a roundabout. Roundabouts are excellent junction infrastructure when needing to distribute traffic organically. They only work though if there is an approximate balance in all the approaching roads, if this balance shifts the roundabout could cause a potential block to some of the approaching arms.
 - Change of use of area – Examples include an industrial area becomes residential or there is a permanent increase/decrease in retail units or there is a permanent increase/decrease in office space.
- *No consideration has been put in place for people that wish to drop off or collect persons at Basildon train station.*

We understand this and are making a large part of the Cherrydown East loop around Trafford House a drop off/pick zone

- *Confusion to drivers.*

As part of the scheme, we will be doing a wider review of the directional signage and rationalising/changing/adding/removing signs as necessary. Please see the plans below for details of the traffic movements available.

- *Don't remove subways, make subways cleaner and safer with good lights and security cameras to make people feel safe.*

As part of the development of the area and the ongoing issues with criminal and anti-social behaviour around subways, the decision has been made to close them and to fill these in. Additional lighting and CCTV may help to reduce these issues, but it will not eradicate the problem.

- *There is nothing wrong with the present bus and train interchange arrangements at present that could not be overcome with better thought and attention to surface-level crossings. There is no reason at all to change the traffic flow arrangements.*

As part of the scheme we will be introducing increased and upgraded crossings in the area of the sustainable transport hub.

- *Changing the bus layby and taxi pickup point outside Asda just seems to be changed for change sake and would be a complete waste of money.*

This is included in the scheme, due to safety concerns. If a passenger tries to exit or enter the taxi on the driver's side, they will have to enter a live dual carriageway. By switching the bus stop and taxi rank, this provides a safety buffer zone to better accommodate this action.

- You haven't considered deliveries such as Amazon, Sainsburys, Asda etc. Also, you haven't considered refuse collection, removal companies or tradesmen.

As part of the Highway Code, deliveries are allowed to park on double yellow lines, unless it is unsafe to do so.

- Bus gates are a very bad idea. I've one in action in the City of London. It is now gone.

Bus gates are an effective way of managing and enforcing restricted areas. They need to be monitored on a case by case basis post installation to determine their efficiency, but we feel this is a prime position for one.

- The proposed pedestrian crossing linking the railway station to the bus station would be better served by a traffic light controlled crossing rather than a zebra crossing as a constant stream of pedestrians using a zebra crossing, especially when a train has arrived, is likely to cause prolonged congestion to arriving and departing buses.

There will be a new controlled crossing at the rail station as well as the zebra crossing. In addition, once the restrictions are in place, there will be less private car users within the vicinity and therefore any delays will be minimal.

- During rush hour traffic can stretch back to Roundacre roundabout. Traffic from town centre car parks have two lanes to disperse but this is being reduced to one.

Existing congestion will not be exacerbated but will be improved due to new dispersal routes. Cars exiting car parks onto roads that will become two-way will be managed by intelligent signal systems, thereby reducing the perceived delay.

- During rush period traffic driving along Cherrydown will have priority turning right into Clay Hill Road and with the number of vehicles being driven into one lane will stop traffic going up Clay Hill Road from Southernhay

As above, existing congestion will not be exacerbated but will be improved due to new dispersal routes. Cars using roads that will become two-way will be managed by intelligent signal systems, thereby reducing the perceived delay.

- Improve the lighting and reduce flooding.

As part of the scheme, the county council will be updating non-LED lighting to LED as well as maintaining and improving existing drainage where possible.

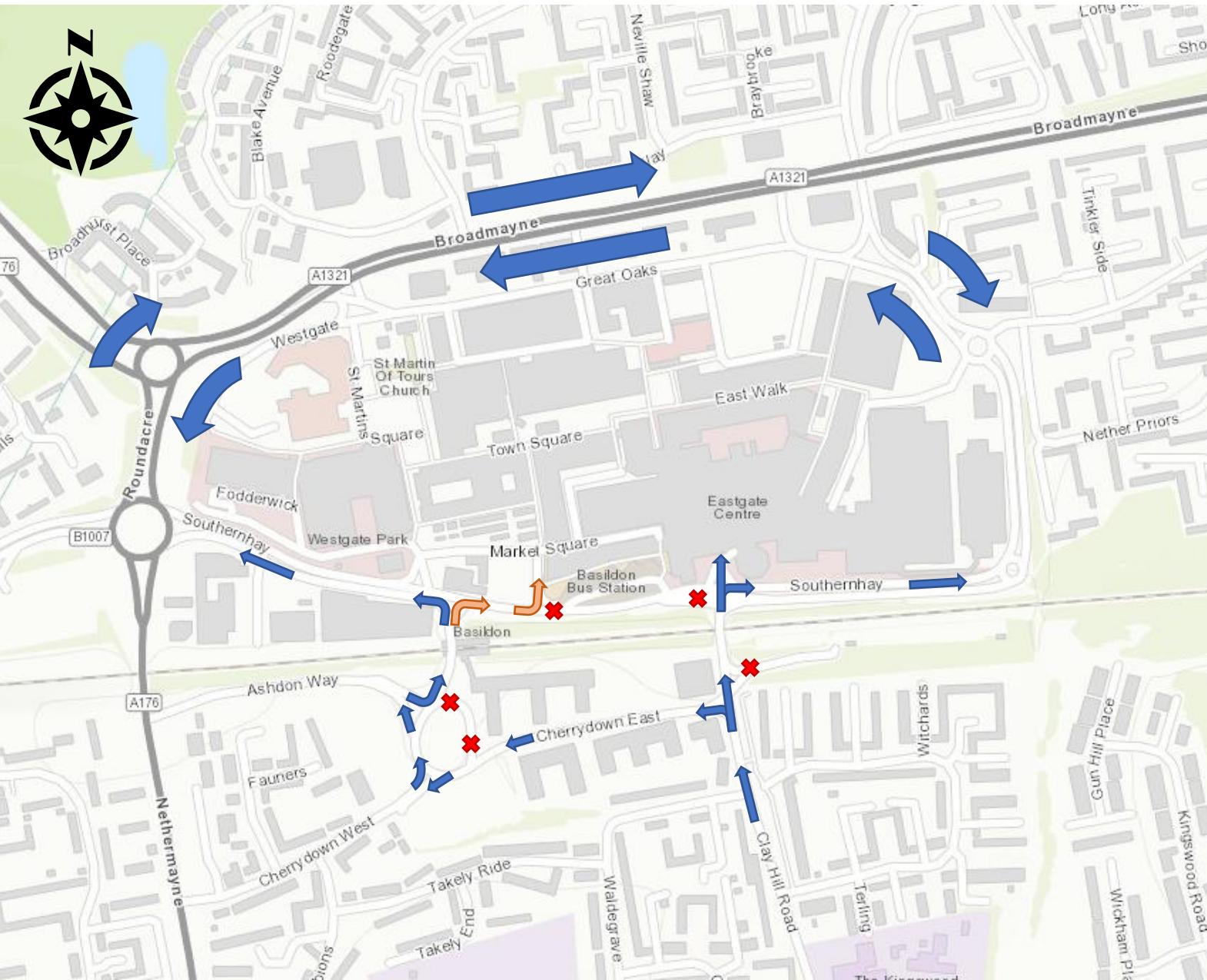
- How will these arrangements affect the new college being built as there will be a considerable number of students crossing the roads and this will affect the flow of traffic.

As above, there will be a new controlled crossing at the train station as well as the zebra crossing. In addition, once the restrictions are in place, there will be less private car users within the vicinity and therefore any delays will be minimal.

- *The best possible improvement to bus/train/taxi interchange would be a new eastern entrance to Basildon Station opposite the entrance to Eastgate.*

As part of the scheme, all options were considered to create improvements to the town centre for all aspects. Unfortunately, this option is not practical on this scheme due to the extent of significant carriageway and bus and rail station reconfiguration.

Please refer to the next few pages for traffic routing maps and journey time data



APPROACHING THE TOWN CENTRE FROM CLAY HILL ROAD

IMPROVED

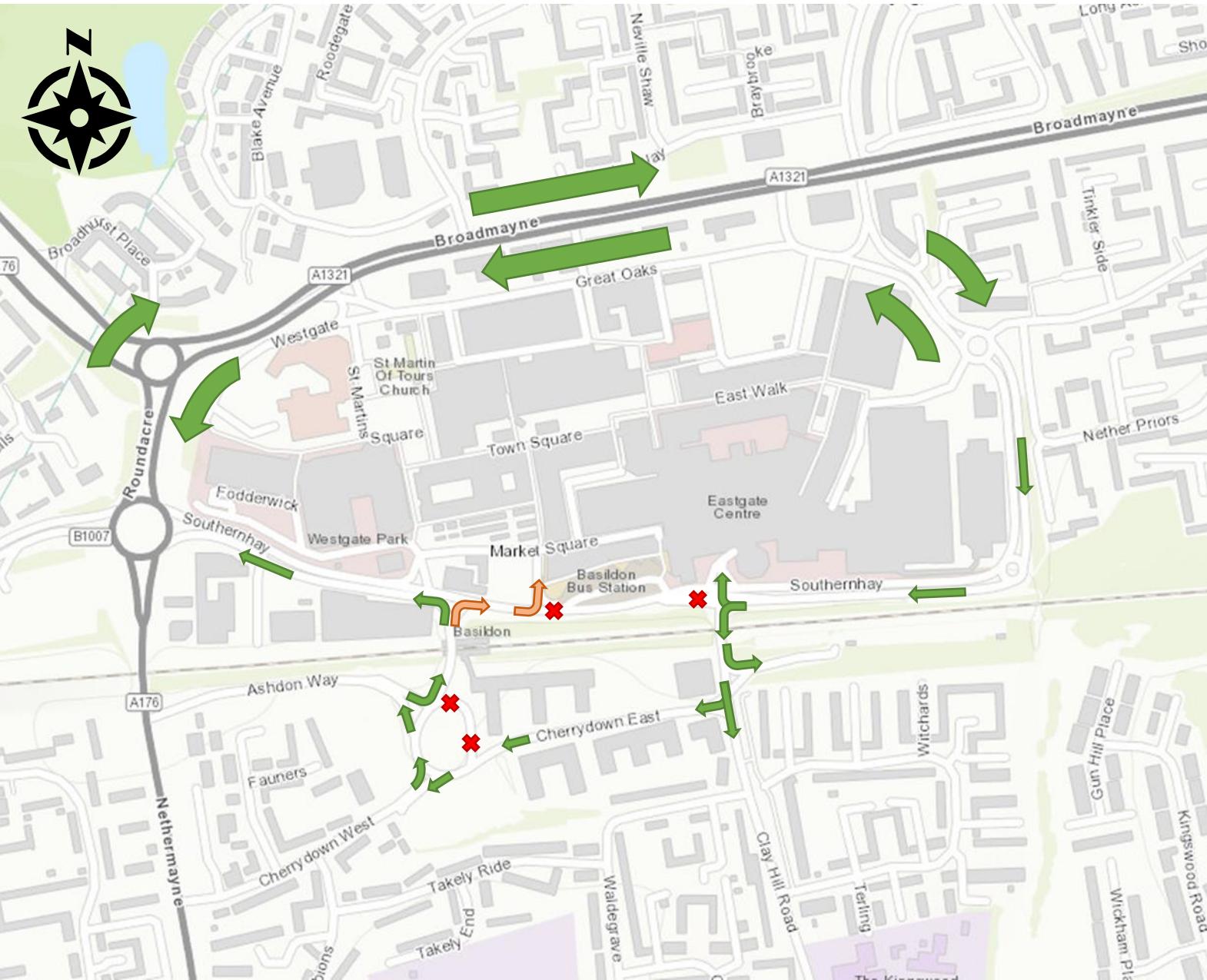
- Access will now be directly available to the Eastgate Centre and the eastern end of Southernhay without the need to use the Cherrydown East/Station Way/Southernhay loop.

MAINTAINED

- Access along Cherrydown East will be maintained.
- Access to Cherrydown West and Ashdon Way car parks will be maintained and they retain their left in/left out junctions.
- Access to Market Pavement will be maintained ONLY if required for deliveries or accessing Market Square.

AMENDED

- Access will be denied to Southernhay in front of the Bus Station due to the installation of the new bus gate
- Access to Car Park 13 won't be available from this direction and will be left in/left out only.
- Access to Station Way teardrop drop off and pick up won't be available from this direction and will be left in/left out only.



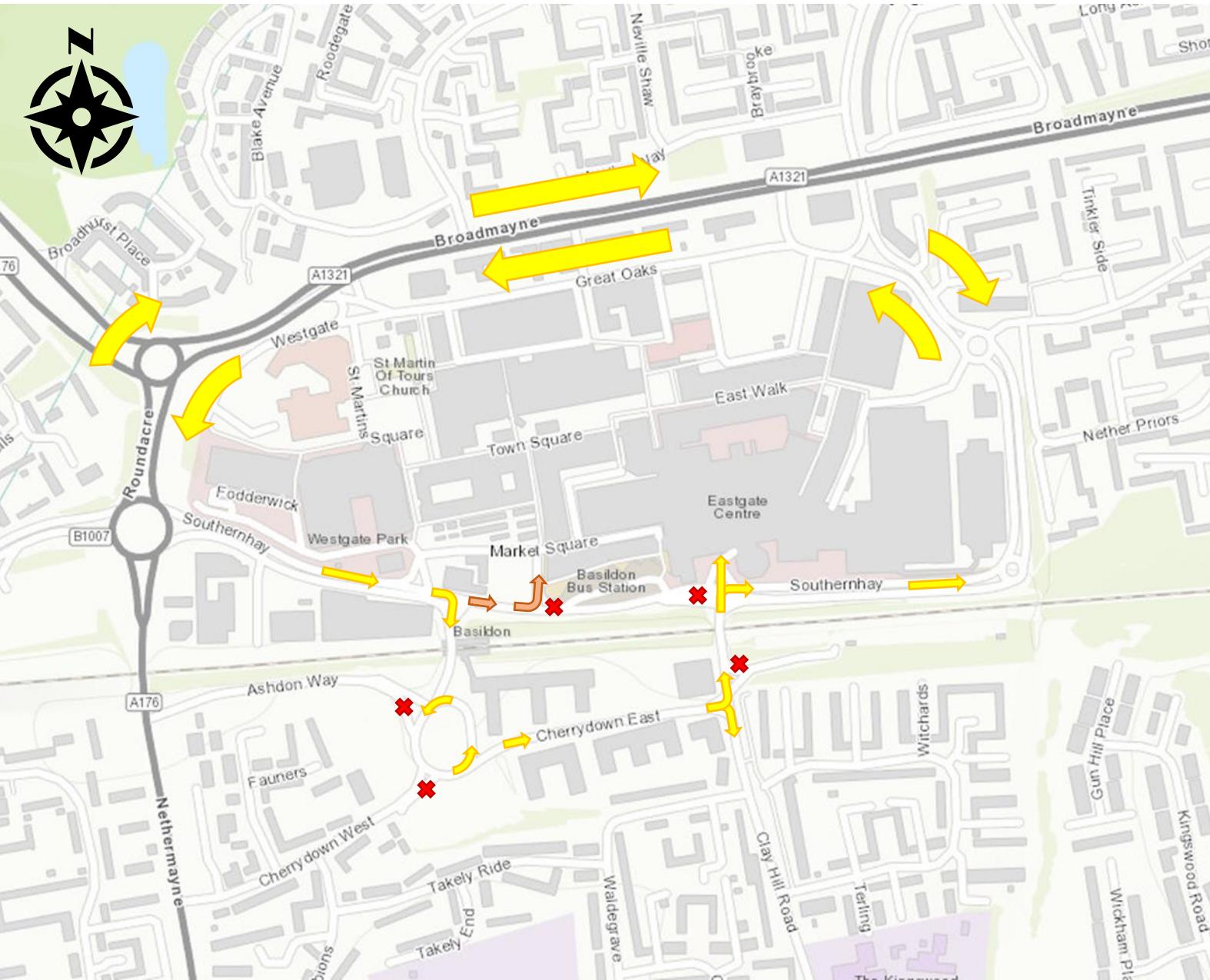
APPROACHING THE TOWN CENTRE FROM SOUTHERNHAY IN THE EAST

MAINTAINED

- Access to the Eastgate centre will be maintained
- Access along Clay Hill Road will be maintained
- Access along Cherrydown East will be maintained.
- Access to Cherrydown West, Car Park 13 (Clay Hill Road) and Ashdon Way car parks will be maintained and they retain their left in/left out junctions.
- Access to Market Pavement will be maintained ONLY if required for deliveries or accessing Market Square. 

AMENDED

- Access will be denied to Southernhay in front of the Bus Station due to the installation of the new bus gate
- Access to Station Way teardrop drop off and pick up won't be available from this direction and will be left in/left out only.



APPROACHING THE TOWN CENTRE FROM ROUNDACRE

IMPROVED

- Access to the new Station Way teardrop drop off and pick up will be left in/left out only and available to access from this direction only.

MAINTAINED

- Access to Market Pavement will be maintained ONLY if required for deliveries or accessing Market Square.
- Access to Clay Hill Road will be maintained.

AMENDED

- Implementation of the new two-way route of Station Way/Cherrydown East/Clay Hill Road.
- Access to the Eastgate Centre and the eastern end of Southernhay will be accessed via the new two-way route.
- Access to Cherrydown West, Car Park 13 (Clay Hill Road) and Ashdon Way car parks won't be available from this direction and will be left in/left out junctions.
- Access will be denied to Southernhay in front of the Bus Station due to the installation of the new bus gate



Route	Existing AM Peak	Scheme AM Peak	Existing PM Peak	Scheme PM Peak	Existing Daily Peak	Scheme Daily Peak
1 to 2	204	231	645	266	849	497
2 to 1	124	184	546	203	670	387
3 to 4	331	304	300	287	631	591
4 to 3	320	296	414	344	734	640
5 to 6	145	228	166	68	311	296
6 to 5	53	75	102	59	155	134
TOTALS	1177	1318	2173	1227	3350	2545

Table 1 – Journey time in seconds

Nb. Journey times that have been reduced have been highlighted in green, journey times that have been increased have been highlighted in red.

It can be seen from above that there is a general trend for individual journey times to be improved as part of the scheme. All PM peak and daily peak journeys have been improved. The only exception to this is the AM Peak journey times. As a result of the scheme, there have been unavoidable delays on 4 of the 6 routes, but it is worth noting though that the delays are minimal ranging from 18 seconds to 83 seconds (1min 23secs) at the worst case. A total AM delay for the 6 routes of 141 seconds (2mins 21secs) is considered immaterial from a traffic modelling perspective, for peak time journeys and is regarded as acceptable.

Trafford House

- *It was only a little while ago when money was spent putting traffic lights in before the roundabout and filling in the subway, which has made crossing the road safer and improved access to the station.*

These works referred to were part of the Trafford House development. The developer had a planning condition to create the new at-grade puffin crossing. As part of our scheme, we will be upgrading this to a toucan to accommodate cyclist movements without the need to dismount.

- *The roundabout outside Trafford House is totally unsuitable for two-way traffic. It would have to be totally remodelled to remove the adverse camber, which is not possible due to feeder roads and the railway bridge clearances.*

Our design consultants have confirmed the suitability of the sweeping camber. This camber was installed when the road was originally two-way.

Consultation

- *This is a big decision and I would have expected the council to send out newsletters or to have widely consulted around the community especially focussing on residents. I doubt the residents are even aware of this issue and that the consultation ends on 29th March. I myself only became aware of the consultation only after I received a newsletter from my local councillor.*

The consultation was advertised appropriately and sent out via:

- A dedicated scheme website: essex.gov.uk/basildontc. This included the overview of the scheme, an information leaflet and an online questionnaire.
- Consultation leaflet – this was provided at the locations referred to above and included a detachable hard copy questionnaire.
- Completed questionnaires could be submitted online, via a (monitored) scheme post box, or via post to Essex County Council.
- Press release sent out in advance of the consultation.
- Letters to County Members, local ward Members and stakeholders advising of the consultation, sent via e-mail.
- Member briefings over the past year including Basildon Cabinet Members in June 2018, as well as stakeholder meetings including the Basildon Bus Forum, the Basildon Taxi and Private Hire Forum, C2C and First Group Ltd.

The proposals originate from the Basildon Town Centre Master Plan, which was consulted upon at that time and was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, December 2012. The highway proposals of this scheme are enacting what has already been confirmed as planning policy, however, bearing in mind that time has passed since the Masterplan adoption, there is an underlying need to raise the profile of the project, consult upon the highway proposals, and take action to amend the scheme if necessary depending upon the feedback received.

- *I get the impression that any negative comments will be ignored. Already seems a done deal to me as work already appears to be starting.*

All comments have and will be considered. As part of this consultation, the county council has identified and will instigate certain changes to the scheme that has been captured in these comments.

- *Your documents refer to public realm. What does this mean in plain English?*

Public realm is a generic term often used to refer to external urban spaces that are publicly accessible.

- *Your timetable is far too quick “construction starting early 2019” well, it's March right now.*

This was following our aspirational programme for works. Revised timescales will be confirmed as the scheme progresses. It is essential that we bottom out all aspects of design, as well as feedback, before construction begins, therefore timescales are subject to change as is commensurate of schemes of this nature.

Environmental

- *The increase in traffic will increase noise and pollution levels. This will result in health issues such as sleep deprivation and air quality reduction.*

The switch to two-way traffic will naturally manage perceived negative impacts. Noise and air quality will improve and there will be an improvement to journey times. Free flowing traffic movements created by the scheme will create less congestion and less stacked traffic which will reduce negative air quality impacts post scheme completion. In addition, there is a known problem with vehicle speeds, especially on Cherrydown East, which is currently difficult to manage on the existing wide one-way carriageway. This will be significantly reduced thereby reducing negative air quality impacts further. The county council is also making a significant improvement to connectivity between the bus station and the rail station, increasing cycle facilities significantly and improving the borough cycleway network. Noise levels will not be increased to a level that will disrupt any residents sleep and will be improved by the above measures.

- *Why has the vegetation along Southernhay been cleared? Is this for a project of some sort? Path extension perhaps? Surely the Council wouldn't remove the vegetation for no reason...So could you please tell me why the vegetation was removed and if you have any plans to replace what has been removed?*

The reason for the removal of the vegetation in question was primarily for the following reasons:

- To reduce potential for anti-social and dangerous behaviour.
- To prevent drug use occurring within the vegetation.
- To facilitate the future upgrade of Network Rail's boundary palisade fencing.

With regard to the timing of these works, it was essential to undertake the vegetation clearance prior to the bird nesting season. It was the intention of the Basildon Town

Centre Improvements scheme, pending the outcome of the public consultation, to widen the footway along Southernhay to create a shared footway / cycleway. In this respect removal of the vegetation would provide an advantage to the scheme in having undertaken some preliminary works, which would indeed help to facilitate the proposed shared footway / cycleway. However, in this context either new saplings, hedging or landscaping will be installed wherever practicable to improve biodiversity as part of the scheme. I would also like to point out that the decision to remove the selected vegetation for the short term was not taken lightly.

- *As great as the scheme is, I believe there should also be more of a 'design' to the area, which includes more greenery. Planting small trees between the taxi rank and bus shelter will help alleviate bus pollution and limit sound.*

As above, either new saplings, hedging or landscaping will be installed wherever practicable to improve biodiversity as part of the scheme.

- *Especially given you've announced poor air quality in the area surely this should be your top priority?*

Basildon Town Centre has not been identified as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), the area being referred to is the current Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) scheme for the north of Basildon along the A127 corridor. As mentioned above, the scheme will provide improvements to air quality.

4.5 “You said, we did”

As part of all comments received, whether prior or during the consultation, ECC has identified some changes to our original proposals. These are:

- Removal of changes to the Ghyllgrove bus link,
- Removal of blanket changes to parking along Cherrydown East,
- Addition of a pick-up/drop off area in the Cherrydown East loop outside of Trafford House,
- Additional amendments to the puffin to toucan crossing upgrade on Cherrydown East via volume and mute control measures,
- The “bus/taxi only” lanes that were proposed along Southernhay have now been amended to be standard bus lanes to incorporate access for motorcycles and bicycles,
- ECC will be investigating all areas for additional planting as opposed to just re-planting in areas of lost vegetation.